

VZCZCXYZ0001
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIN #1039/01 0870924
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 280924Z MAR 06
FM AIT TAIPEI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9365
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4975
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 6170

UNCLAS AIT TAIPEI 001039

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - ERIC BARBORIAK
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: KMT CHAIRMAN MA YING-JEOU'S U.S. TRIP

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their coverage March 28 on a controversial civil lawsuit filed by a local manpower company against Thai laborers for causing a riot at a Kaohsiung mass rapid transit construction site; KMT Chairman Ma Ying-jeou's U.S. trip; and other political and environmental issues. The pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan's biggest daily, ran an exclusive news story on its front page with the banner headline: "[Taiwan's] Navy to Hold Big Exercises Starting Today. Taiwan, the United States, and Japan Will Link up Their Line of Security Defense." The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily," on the other hand, ran a front-page news story that quoted KMT Organizational Development Committee Chief Liao Feng-teh as saying the pan-Blue camp will announce its candidate for the 2008 presidential election by August 2007.

In terms of Ma's U.S. trip, the pro-status quo "China Times" ran a news story on its page four with the headline: "Ma: Taiwan Will Not Become a Flash Point in Asia." The "China Times" also spent almost all of its page four reporting on the last leg of Ma's stay in the United States and the DPP's comments on Ma's trip.

¶2. The pro-independence papers, including the "Liberty Times," "Taiwan Daily," and limited-circulation, English-language "Taipei Times," continued to editorialize on Ma's U.S. trip by criticizing Ma's cross-Straits policy; according to these newspapers' editorials, Ma's U.S. remarks reveal his pro-China stance and wishful thinking. A "China Times" commentary also said Ma's cross-Straits policy is full of uncertainties. An editorial in the limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" said: "It now requires Beijing's patience and Washington's resolve to rein in the reckless Chen, who is bent on building a legacy as the leader of Taiwan independence during his remaining two years in office." End summary.

A) "[Do We] Still Need to Deify Ma Ying-jeou?"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 600,000] editorialized (3/28):

"... The media were crazy about idolizing Ma Ying-jeou during his trip to the United States by exaggerating the high-profile treatment he received. But they overlooked the fact that Ma's free and unlimited disclosure of his unification complex has led people to compare him with [South Korean President] Roh Moo-Hyun. It is indeed a huge irony for those media which uphold globalization all the time to make a god of Ma behind closed doors. ..."

B) "A Close Look into Ma's Vacillating Ideas of Taiwan's Sovereignty and His Cross-Straits Policy Will Make the [Taiwan] People Better Understand His Pro-China Nature"

The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 100,000] said in an editorial (3/28):

"... During his U.S. trip, Ma Ying-jeou failed to expose to the U.S. government and the international community China's aggressiveness to use force against Taiwan and he failed to appeal to them about China's various attempts to squeeze and suppress Taiwan's room in the international community. Ma's behaviors clearly indicate that he does not constantly keep the Taiwan people and Taiwan's sovereignty in his heart. Ma did not even dare to speak up loudly about Taiwan's self-defense needs when he talked about the [U.S.] arms procurement bill. Taiwan people, how can you not be angry with such a Ma Ying-jeou? How can you feel comfortable about allowing such a Ma Ying-jeou to become Taiwan's president in 2008?"

C) "Ma Ying-jeou's Wishful Thinking"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (3/28):

"During his tour of the US, Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Chairman Ma Ying-jeou finally elaborated to an extent on his future policies as leader of the KMT. It is now time for US government officials in charge of East Asian affairs and the Taiwanese public to make an objective assessment of what Ma said and to see if it stands up to scrutiny. ... Ma's arguments, along with his oratorical skills, may make him a much worthier leader of the opposition. The problem is that Ma's vision of the development of cross-strait relations is distorted by wishful thinking. For example, he still markets the '1992 consensus,' which never existed ... Ma must surely be aware that Beijing's idea of a consensus is that Taiwan accepts China's position on the issue, no matter what. ... It is unlikely, therefore, that China is going to accept Ma's standpoint of 'one China, with each side having its own interpretation.' ...

"When Ma talks of 'one China,' he is referring to the ROC, whose territory includes the PRC, Inner Mongolia and Taiwan. This not only goes against international consensus, but also betrays a stubbornness of which dictator Chiang Kai-shek himself would have been proud. By raising this idea during his US trip, Ma showed some political naivete. This probably caused a lot of talk and not a little mirth amongst government officials in the US, and did little to impress those in Beijing. It would seem that the new generation of KMT leaders do not have anything new to say, still fantasizing that their David can fell China's Goliath, unaware that they are in constant danger of being flattened. Ma's trip to the US should have taught him that he still has much to learn about international politics."

D) "Ma Ying-jeou Should Do More Homework"

Columnist Wang Hsing-ching said in the pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] (3/28):

"... Evidently, Ma Ying-jeou seems to have passed the 'three-sided examination' jointly hosted by the U.S. deputy secretary of state, the deputy national security adviser, and the assistant secretary of defense. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that TECRO Chief David Lee was not invited to attend such a meeting. If Lee participated in the meeting, he would naturally, based on his job responsibilities, have had to report to President Chen Shui-bian about the contents of the meeting, but now A-bian has no clue about the contents of Ma's conversation with the United States. Such a move was highly symbolic as it indicates that Washington has deliberately determined to isolate A-bian. Washington's attempt to 'freeze Bian' has proved that it has become a fixed direction of the United States to 'draw a line to lock Bian in' over the next two years.

"But Ma's several public remarks made during his U.S. trip indicates that his cross-Straits policy is indeed full of uncertainties. When he talked about the '1992 Consensus,' direct transportation across the Taiwan Strait, the opening of Taiwan investments on the mainland, or even the 'modus vivendi,' he was obviously reiterating the KMT's version of its cross-Straits policy. But Ma's logic seemed to get incoherent when he said 'the ROC is an independent sovereign state;' 'Taiwan does not need to declare independence twice;' and when he mentioned the historical development of Taiwan. Somehow,

beneath his Blue skin was revealed some Green bone. ..."

E) "Ma Revising KMT-CCP Race"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] said in an editorial (3/28):

"Ma Ying-jeou returns home tomorrow from a nine-day, five-city U.S. trip aimed at building an image of a cultivated, pragmatic and trustworthy leader, in contrast with that of Taiwan's present leader, President Chen Shui-bian. ... If Ma becomes president, cross-strait relations will be transformed and the long delayed economic and social integration between the two sides will be accelerated. In turn, that will unleash a new economic boom in Taiwan, put China in a more favorable light in Taiwan, and ultimately promote the 'Taiwan experience' of freedom and democracy on the mainland. But that is still two years away. The current administration, which provokes China, will stay on until 2008. It now requires Beijing's patience and Washington's resolve to rein in the reckless Chen, who is bent on building a legacy as the leader of Taiwan independence during his remaining two years in office. ..."

YOUNG